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THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INSTITUTION OF A POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER (PCSO) IN THE LIGHT OF LEGAL AND POLITICAL CHANGES

The ongoing changes in society, as well as new challenges related to the vision of the Police as an institution serving the citizens, bring newer and newer tasks to the Police. The nature of these tasks indicates the direction that guides the broadly understood activities of the Police. The ultimate goal is security, the measure of which is to be a real sense of security for every citizen of our country. In the Polish society there is a common view that the state of order and the security of citizens is primarily the responsibility of the Police and other state bodies such as prosecutors and courts whose statutory task is to ensure security. Increasing the sense of social security, reducing crime and phenomena related to various pathologies, as well as building mutual trust and social bonds – these are the expectations related to the work of the district police officer. These expectations are based on constant contacts that should be maintained by the district police officer with the community in their sector and other entities that have or could affect the improvement of safety.

The scope of tasks and responsibilities of the police community support officer (PCSO) is very wide. He/she should not only have knowledge about the

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specifics of his/her service area, but also implement various programs, including crime prevention and traffic, prosecute offenders of crimes and offenses and at the same time serve the citizens. With the changes in society, the economy and the state structures in the Police itself also changed in the sector of PCSOs. Each subsequent change referred to the previous one and each new state was a development of the previous one or a change for itself. The analysis of legal regulations and organizational solutions undertaken over the last several decades and relating to PCSOs indicates that they evolved according to a clear and quite interesting tendency. In the interwar period, the PCSO was treated like a police community support administrator equipped with relatively broad competences, also related to the supervision over other police services. After the war, it became one of the key elements of the system of collecting information about residents and maintaining full control over them, and the most important instrument of community work was to be operational work and the creation of an extensive network of informers¹.

After 1989 the PCSO institution underwent a significant change. It was assumed that a PCSO will be a policeman/woman who would know everything and would solve all the problems he/she would encounter in his/her area. For almost a decade, this vision has not been reflected in practice. The time has come to change this belief in favor of the fact that the PCSO must have support and protection against performing activities that have often contradicted his professional role but also effectively detached him/her from the essence of his/her function. The right postulate was requested to raise the prestige of the PCSO in the social and professional environment. Over the recent years, the PCSO has become a 'first contact' policeman closely cooperating with the society, listening to the problems that bother the society, undertaking preventive actions jointly with and for the local community.

The discussion about the role the PCSO in the Police is a priority for the current government. 'The PCSO in the neighborhood' is one of the basic programs that the government of PIS (Law and Justice party) pursues in order to build trust between the services and citizens. Until now, so-called 'first contact officers' often had to perform the tasks of preventive police officers, so they did not have time to get interested in the affairs of the residents. The program is the first such a comprehensive change in the approach to community support police services. Directions of changes in the community support police services concern the areas of staffing, training, social communication, service organization and modernization. The program was inaugurated in June last year. Minister Mariusz Błaszczak signed the ordinance thanks to which a new, better paid position was created - a senior PCSO. Thanks to this the function of the PCSO became profitable for police officers, performing it will not exclude promotion. This is an extremely important change because in this position experience and a good understanding of the area in which one performs service are very important.

¹ Z. Lasocik, *Dzielnicowy w nowoczesnej formacji policyjnej*, Department of Criminology and Criminal Policy of the Warsaw University, Warsaw 2011, p. 20.

PCSOs are the officers who are crucial for the Polish Police. The new position gives prospects for professional development, gives the opportunity for promotion, also in the financial aspect. The Ministry of Interior and Administration also prepared special leaflets that are distributed by 'first-contact officers'. Each of us will find the contact details of our PCSO and a description of new applications that facilitate contact with the police including 'My Community Police Headquarters' or 'National Security Risk Map'. Another change is the priority action plan for the service area being developed by each PCSO. This six-monthly schedule of activities will be consulted with residents, so that each of us will have an impact on their own safety. The coming years will show in which direction the new status of the PCSO outlined by a new government program will be heading for. These changes are expected by the public and the community support officers themselves, who received weapons in the form of changes in their structure and regulations specifying their service as well as tasks defined by the government and expected by local communities.

After the system changes in Poland after 1989, a number of legal acts regulating the functioning of the Police were introduced including the functioning of the sector of the PCSOs. The legal acts have been modified over the years. Many changes were introduced depending on the political situation or adjusting the legal functioning of the institution of the PCSO to the needs of both the service and social needs. Analyzing the literature and legal acts issued in recent years, one can notice how the institution of the PCSO has changed and how the forms and methods of PCSOs' work were shaped.

The Act of 6 April 1990 on the Police² in the version published in 1990 did not contain any regulations related to the functioning of PCSOs, but it opened up the possibility of creating additional Police posts in districts and covering their maintenance costs by poviát or commune authorities. In Article 13 (4) of this Act, the role of territorial self-government in financing police posts is provided. Hence at the request of the poviát council or commune council, the number of Police posts in the districts may be increased above a certain number. This may happen, however, if the self-government bodies assume the obligation to cover the related costs for a period of at least 5 years. The introduction of Article 8a, where the legislator regulated the basic issues related to the functioning of PCSOs, became a significant one. The legislator pointed out that it is the Poviát Police Commander or City Police Commander who can create community police areas and the creation of a district area should take place on the principles set by the Police Commander in Chief. In Article 8a (3) the basic tasks of the head of a police community support sector (HPCSS) and the head of a police station were defined. Above all, their tasks include identifying threats and counteracting the causes of their emergence. The duties of the HPCSS are to perform administrative and procedural activities and other activities that should be carried out immediately, in particular related to the reporting of crime and securing the place of the event.

² Act of 6 April 1990 on the Police (uniform text Journal of Laws of 2017, item 2067).

The first legal regulation after the system changes regarding the police community support services was the issue of the Order No. 4 of the Police Commander in Chief of April 20, 1995 regarding the police community support service including heads of the police community support organizational unit (PCSOU). This document introduced a legal regulation entitled 'The instructions on the police community support service and heads of the PCSOU'. §1 defines what the police community support service consists of. The essence of the service is the recognition of threats to the security of citizens and public order in the area of the police community support service. Hazard recognition is to be used in preventive and detective activities of the Police³. 'The instructions' define the basic concepts such as 'region of the PCSO', 'PCSOU', 'PCSS'. In § 3, the scope of responsibility of the district commanders was determined. They were responsible for the division of the area into districts and regions of the police community support service. When making such a division, the district commanders should take into account objective criteria, e.g. population, degree of urbanization, number of commercial establishments. The submission of the heads of PCSOU was specified in § 4, according to which the supervisors of the heads of PCSS were the heads of PCSOU or a designated policeman. 'The instruction' indicated the qualifications of police officers performing police community support functions, which included the completion of a specialist NCO training course for PCSOs and a 3-month internship as a PCSO assistant, as well as the positive opinion of the head of the basic unit. 'The Instruction' specifies that the personal inspection on foot is the most important form of performing PCSO service. The time of the inspection, which should fulfill at least 60% of the time of community service, was also determined. It was found that the PCSO conducts constant recognition of the area assigned to him/her in terms of people and terrain, and it was pointed out that the PCSO should gather information on the geographical location of the region, administrative division, population, socio-economic relations, religious culture and history, and at the end it was stipulated that the PCSO is to collect information on the risks of crime and misdemeanors, as well as on crime inducing threats.

The PCSO's task was also a personal identification, and at the same time he/she must know people who pose a threat for law and order and in the region. With these people, the PCSO should conduct preventive talks or should apply for the use of educational or repressive measures against them. The obligation to observe the area by the PCSO and in particular the need to know the topography of the region (the course of communication lines, the seat of the most important institutions and offices, enterprises, workplaces, and gastronomic premises) was also included. The PCSO was obliged to convey his/her observations to his/her superiors, as well as to propose solutions for the dislocation of patrol services.

³ The PCSO's work consists of 'recognizing threats to the safety of citizens and public order in the area of the service, in order to use it in the preventive and detective activities of the Police' (Instruction on the community service and head of PCSOU) introduced by the Order No. 4 of the Police Commander in Chief of 20 April 1995 on the police community support service and the head of the PCSOU.

When undertaking preventive activities he/she should contact a specialist who performs criminal prevention tasks. In the area of prosecution of crimes, the PCSO's obligations were formulated; in particular, it was the reading of information about offenses committed in the district, immediate response to the message about a specific crime, among others securing the place of the event so that traces and evidence will not be polluted or lost, establishing witnesses and victims, taking steps to determine the place of stay of the perpetrator of the crime and actions to recover objects lost through crime. The PCSO should also collect information about the perpetrators of crimes, analyze it and pass it on to other police services. Also the PCSO's responsibilities were also mentioned to which belongs the conduct of simplified and private prosecution proceedings. The PCSO should also provide operational work. The PCSO's duties also included the supervision over compliance with the order regulations. The PCSO could use such measures as a penalty, reprimand or caution. He/she should also provide assistance to enforcement authorities, conduct interviews at the request of other bodies, provide assistance to officers of other organizational units of the Police, and appear in colleges of misdemeanors as public prosecutor. The head of the PCSOU and the management of the Police basic unit should make a district assessment based on the criteria: knowledge of the region and proper diagnosis of public order threats, effectiveness in crime prevention, effectiveness of participation in detecting crimes and the degree of executing superiors' orders and implementation of own ventures. The basic tasks of the head were formulated in this document. The head undertakes activities aimed at ensuring public order and safety in the area of the PCSOU, as well as supervises the police community support operational work. He is obliged to act as public prosecutor before misdemeanors colleges. The task in the scope of the organization of police community support services is to create a plan of work and a schedule of specific tasks undertaken by the district police officer, as well as organize consultations to discuss current problems.

The responsibility of the head of the PCSOU is also to collect information about crimes and current analysis of this material, to participate directly in preliminary activities concerning the most serious crimes, to direct PCSOs to participate in preliminary activities of serious crimes taking place in their service areas, formulate postulates regarding crime tactics, organize cooperation with other policemen and representatives of public administration bodies, institutions and schools, as well as initiate meetings with the public and develop ties with citizens. The head of the PCSOU should hold the district officers accountable for the effectiveness of their work once a month. The head of the PCSOU was also obliged to receive citizens on complaints and requests regarding the work of his/her subordinate police officers. The obligation to document the course of the service was also a responsibility of a PCSO and PCSOU. The PCSOU should keep a book to control the cases assigned to the PCSO and a notebook for recording accounts and work results. The PCSO, on the other hand, was to keep

a notebook recording work results and files with the cases related to the region.

The Order No. 15 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of 23 September 1999 on the methods and forms of performing tasks by the district police officer and head of the district police sector⁴ was the first internal legal act published in the Official Journal of the Police Headquarters. The criteria for appointing a policeman a PCSO post were set down there. Pursuant to this Order three posts in the police community support section were created: junior PCSO, PCSO and senior PCSO. In the case of promotion the length of service and specialist courses were indicated. The Order stipulates that an assignment of more than one service area may last no longer than 6 months. This order introduced a ban on the allocation of preparatory proceedings to PCSOs preparatory proceedings. The duties of the head of the PCSS have also been expanded to supervising district work and maintaining the efficiency of PCSOs work. It was stressed that in the area of crime prevention, the PCSO and the head of the PCSS should cooperate with a specialist in the field of crime prevention. It was added that the local government should be involved in the process of appointing of heads of PCSSs. The Poviats (municipal) Police Commander appoints the PCOs and heads of PCSSs after consulting the commune head, town mayor or president or other authorized executive body of the commune auxiliary unit.

In the area of prevention of committing crimes and misdemeanors, tasks related to the prevention of domestic violence were implemented. The most important organizational unit in the field of organizing community work of PCSOs remains the service region. The sector includes several or a dozen of such regions, which are the supervision of the head of PCSS. The basic form of performing community service is the personal inspection on foot, and the time of the observation should fulfill 60% of the time of community service. The personal inspection was defined as moving within the boundaries of the assigned area and carrying out tasks resulting from the scope of district work duties.

The Order also defines the PCSO's duties, which consisted, among other things, of operational work in the assigned district, both in terms of administrative division, as well as socio-economic relations, interpersonal conflicts, etc., documenting all information obtained and transferring it to the other organizational units of the Police. The PCSO's task was also to disclose people committing crimes, addicted to alcohol and drugs or mentally ill, talking to such people and organizing help for them. It was determined that the PCSO is to maintain contacts with local community leaders. The duty of the PCSO was also to participate in inspections of property at risk of crime, the obligation to maintain constant contact with victims of crime and taking action in the field of counteracting domestic violence. The PCSO was supposed to react to information about the crime, secure the place of the incident and possible traces, establish witnesses and victims provide help to victims, and determine the whereabouts of persons suspected of committing a crime. It was added that the PCSO is to

⁴ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 1999. No. 15, item 107.

draw up descriptions of possible perpetrators, make a current analysis of crimes and offenses committed in his/her region). Other responsibilities include control of compliance with applicable administrative regulations and orders in force in the region. The PCSO should conduct environmental enquiries, provide support and assistance to representatives of enforcement authorities, provide assistance and support the policemen from other organizational units and police forces in the activities requiring the knowledge of the region. The obligation of the PCSO to act as a public prosecutor in misdemeanors colleges has been abolished as the head of PCSS had to do it. The head of PCSS was also to organize community work, help PCSOs and supervise the activities of police officers subordinate to him.

The detailed duties of the PCSO include, among others, analyzing the threat to law and order, adapting work schedule of PCSOs to the current needs, participating in all meetings and briefings on the issues of district work. The head of PCSS should hold PCSOs accountable for district-related tasks and professional discipline and run a special book.

The head of PCSS was also to assess the PCSOs, their knowledge and skills including their own initiative in the field of counteracting threats occurring in the area. The head of PCSS should also collect all information including operational ones on offenses and misdemeanors, develop the results for the management of the unit, organize district cooperation with specialists, participate in preliminary activities of the most serious crimes, initiate meetings with residents. The head of PCSS should keep a case control book, a briefing book for the service, a notebook to write PCSOs' accounts, a record of the district work results, a book of admissions for comments and requests about the district work, a PCSOs' work schedule. The PCSO on the other hand, kept a notebook, files with the cases run in the region and a record of work results. An important change in the organization of the Police Community Support Sector was introduced by Order No. 9 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of July 3, 2000, changing the order on methods and forms of performing tasks by PCSOs⁵. It contains information on the liquidation of junior and senior PCSO posts, and therefore the possibility of horizontal promotion. The order also introduced an extension of the so-called 'periodic reports' from one month to three months. The designation of the 'files of the region' has also changed, namely the designation 'Secret (after completion)' has been changed to 'Reserved (after completion)'.

Order No. 23 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of November 30, 2001 amending the order on the methods and forms of performing tasks by PCSOs and the head of PCSS⁶ introduced a few changes to the Order No. 15 of the Commander-in-Chief of Police of September 23, 1999 regarding methods and forms of performing tasks by PCSOs and the head of PCSS. It has been noted that the change concerns § 11 (1) point 2, in which the fragment: *participation in the*

⁵ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 2000, No. 5, item 54.

⁶ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 1999, No. 15, item 107 and of 2000, No. 5, item 54

meetings is documented with an official note, a specimen of which is attached as Annex 1 to the order was added. The changes also concerned § 19 (1), which has been given the following wording: *The head of PCSS holds PCSOs accountable periodically – at least once every three months – for performing their tasks and for the observance of professional discipline on the basis of a point evaluation of district work, a specimen of which is given in Annex 2 to the order.* The order repealed point 4 in paragraph 2 and point 3 in paragraph 23.

Quite important information was the introduction of the district work evaluation system. The table, included as Appendix 2, contained a model of such an assessment and it is quite extensive. It allows for charging points to the PCSO for performing specific activities. The table indicates that the basis for awarding points from the reconnaissance area for the needs of the detection process is, for example, the detection of crimes in the region in the categories: theft, burglary, car theft, fight and battery, robbery or other indications indicated by the Voivodeship Police Commander.

Attachment No. 2 also defines the concept of detection and what is the level of detection and how it is calculated. It was found that the so-called 'caught in the act' deeds of the perpetrator (s) are scored, not the number of perpetrators in the categories of theft, theft with burglary, car theft, fights and battery, robberies or others indicated by the Voivodeship Police Commander. The perpetrator's capture in a direct chase was also recognized. The concept of 'caught in the act' was specified. The role of close cooperation with the society was indicated by scoring initiatives that increase the safety of people, places or facilities (e.g. promoting the use of mechanical, physical and electronic security, appropriate illumination of hazardous places). The capturing of the perpetrator on the basis of the information from the community was also scored. The direct superior was supposed to assess such elements as: timeliness and reliability of the implementation of assigned cases, diligence and regularity of the carrying out documentation. The timeliness of dealing with assigned cases was to be assessed on the basis of the entries in *the PCSO Case Control Book*, and the reliability of the settlement of cases on the basis of the remarks and observations of the superiors and the incoming signals from the entities to which they were directed. It should be noted that the score-based evaluation system of the PCSO work was abolished in 2004 by Order No. 151 of the Headquarters of Police of February 20, 2004. This system was strongly criticized by both policemen and analysts as being unsuccessful and not bringing the pride of the Police.

Another amendment to Order No. 1 of 1999 is Order No. 3 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of March 15, 2002 amending the Order on the methods and forms of performing tasks by the PCSOs and the head of PCSS⁷. In § 1 the terms: police unit, district police sector, PCSO's district region, the head of PCSS and PCSO were specified. The two concepts of 'district police sector' and 'district region' meant successively: *district police sector – at least three district regions, designated as the area of operation of the head of PCSS and the district region*

⁷ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 2002, No. 5, item 24.

– *part of the district Police headquarters or police station area designated as PCSO's activity area.* § 3 of Order No. 15 received a new wording in the context of the principles of determining districts regions and indicated criteria to be taken into account when designating districts regions. Among the criteria for determining regions, there were such issues as: population and its demographic structure, the degree of density of housing, the level of risk of crime and other negative behaviors, the location of educational and public facilities. This change was introduced due to the repeal of Order No. 27/98 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of December 9, 1998 on the principles of creating district police sectors.

In the Order No. 21 of the Police Commander in Chief of December 31, 2002 on the manner of conducting a home intervention against domestic violence under the name 'Blue Card'⁸, a special role belongs to the police community support. § 3 implies that the head of the Police organizational unit after receiving the 'A' card from the Police unit officer on duty, instructs to transfer it to the appropriate district police sector or PCSO. The head of the Police organizational unit or a person designated by him/her in his/her area is required to coordinate and supervise the implementation of tasks resulting from the provisions of the order. In § 4 tasks related to the PCSO and the head of PCSS were formulated. Upon the receiving in the mode specified in § 3 (2) of 'A' card the PCSO or the head of PCSS are required to set up a case file entitled 'Domestic violence'. The file contains documentation of interventions against violence in this family and activities undertaken in this scope. Within seven days of the receiving of the intervention documentation, the PCSO should contact the family in which the violence took place in order to get a closer look at the situation and find out if and possibly what kind of help is needed. One should also ask the victim of domestic violence for consent, for sharing personal data and information concerning the family situation with state authorities, self-government bodies and social organizations if this was not possible during the intervention, and written confirmation of this consent on the 'A' card. With the expiration of the problem of domestic violence, the PCSO can end keeping the case file entitled 'Domestic violence' concerning a given family, when the documentation and information obtained show that the phenomenon of violence no longer exists in this family. The PCSO documents the termination of keeping the case file in the form of an official note. The contents of the note are read by the head of the Police unit or a person authorized by him.

Order No. 151 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of February 20, 2004 amending the order on the methods and forms of performing tasks by the PCSO and the head of PCSS⁹ is another amendment in which in § 1 it was stated that the paragraph 11 (1) point 2 of the Order No. 15 of 1999 changed its wording. The change concerned an indication to initiate and participate in meetings organized by self-governments, schools or organizations that can contribute to improving public safety and order, proper education and raising young people and combat-

⁸ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 2002, No. 14, item 111.

⁹ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 2004, No. 4, item 18.

ing pathology. It was pointed out that the head of PCSS periodically - at least once every three months – evaluates every PCSO for performing official tasks and adherence to professional discipline. The form of evaluation is determined by the head of the Police unit. The Order No. 15 of 1999 referred to a system of score-based evaluation of PCSOs. Order No. 151 stated that the form of evaluation is determined by the head of the unit. Therefore, the score-based evaluation system was abandoned. §23 point 6 ordering the head of PCSS to keep the ‘PCSOs work schedule’ was repealed. In the annex to the order the words „RESERVED (after completing)” are deleted. ‘The district region files’ was defined as ‘reserved’ material and earlier it was a secret document (order of 2000). The secrecy clause relating to this document was therefore abolished. The scope of district activities was defined in Order No. 528 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of June 6, 2007¹⁰ on the forms and methods of performing tasks by PCSOs and the head of PCSSs¹¹. The chapters were distinguished in the order. Chapter 1 indicated that the discussed document contains criteria for the allocation of a PCSO of a service area, a form of performing tasks by a PCSO, methods of performing tasks by a PCSO and the head of PCSS and the documentation kept by them. Four new terms were included: ‘Police organizational unit’, ‘police community support section’ and ‘the PCSO’. It was defined that a PCSO is a policeman appointed for this post. The basic form of performing community service is the personal inspection on foot which – as indicated – consists of ‘moving within the boundaries of the assigned service area and carrying out tasks resulting from the scope of his/her official duties’. It was not indicated, however, what percentage of service time should be a circumstance, and therefore the PCSO and its superiors should know best how much time they should devote to being on the inspection and carrying out the tasks assigned. Chapter 2 contains the PCSO’s tasks within the boundaries of the service area assigned to him/her. Four PCSO’s tasks were distinguished. It was indicated that among the PCSO’s tasks there will be the reconnaissance of the assigned service area in terms of people, terrain, phenomena and events affecting the state of public order and safety, implementation of tasks in the field of social prevention, implementation of tasks connected with the prosecution of offenders and control of compliance with the law (§ 8). The PCSO should gather information about his/her area of service. He/she should have an orientation in the field of socio-economic relations and economic and environmental structure, as well as pathological phenomena and social conflicts. He/she should be informed about planned sports, cultural, entertainment and commercial events. In the context of the community work methodology, it should be assumed that he/she will gather information about the people of interest, i.e. punished persons released from prisons or addicts suspected of criminal activity, minors threatened with demoralization and perpetrators of criminal acts and he/she will carry out preventive talks with them and take actions to help these people. The next paragraph formulates the PCSO’s responsibilities in the field of responding

¹⁰ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters, item 38.

¹¹ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 2004, No. 4, item 18.

to committed crimes and prosecuting their perpetrators. It was also determined to what extent the PCSO performs tasks related to social prevention. The division was made into urban and extra-urban areas. However, it has been noted that in particularly justified cases, at the request of the head of a district police unit, the PCSO may be directed to perform a patrol service. The restriction in this respect was indicated, namely the patrol area should cover the PCSO's service area and the neighboring region. It was noted that the PCSO may be assigned other tasks by the head of the organizational unit, in particular performing activities related to accepting crime or misdemeanors reports, performing legal assistance activities, conducting explanatory proceedings in misdemeanors cases. This gave the heads of the Police organizational units wide opportunities to assign tasks to be carried out. The PCSO is to keep official notepad and files of the area in which public information is collected. Chapter 3 defines the scope of tasks and duties of the head of the PCSS as an organizer of PCSOs' work, including, among others, directing the work of subordinate police officers and providing necessary assistance in solving more difficult cases and performing complicated tasks, providing PCSOs with current information on current events relevant to their work, organizing briefings, conducting ongoing cooperation with other organizational units of the Police. The head of PCSS should not conduct verifying and preparatory proceedings. Instead he/she should keep a case control book assigned to a specific PCSO, a book of service briefings and a record of the results of district work. The order introduced significant changes in the field of the PCSO's tasks and the organization of his/her service. The obligation to spend at least 60% of the time of service inspecting the area was abolished. A ban was introduced to assign PCSOs serving in urban areas to such forms of service as escort, security, on-duty, investigation at the disposal of the police organizational unit, which was aimed at enabling the PCSO to increase activity in the field of cooperation with the community. The scope of tasks for PCSOs servicing in extra-urban areas was extended by allowing them to conduct verifying and preparatory proceedings in cases concerning crimes occurring in their service region, carrying out other forms of performing preventive services than personal inspections.

The scope of the documentation and information gathered in the files was significantly limited and the possibility of keeping the files in electronic form was introduced. The determination of criteria for the assessment of PCSO's work was abandoned.

Order No. 921 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of September 11, 2008 changed the order on the forms and methods of performing tasks by PCSOs and the head of PCSS¹². The wording of paragraph 9 (2) under which 'Non-confidential information obtained in the course of district reconnaissance is collected by the PCSO in the region's files' was changed. The word 'non-confidential' was deleted (§ 1 (1)). Since the entry into force of this order the PCSO must keep a notebook and other documentation, the nature of which is specified in separate regulations.

¹² Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 2008, No. 16, item 96.

By Order No. 115 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of 13 April 2012¹³, the order on the forms and methods of performing tasks by a PCSO and the head of PCSS was amended. The changes took place in § 15 (1), in which it is specified that the scope of the DPO's tasks performing service in urban areas does not include escorting, security and on-duty services; investigation work is only at the disposal of the duty officer of the Police organizational unit. Also the changes concerned § 16 (1) point 2, which received the following wording: '2) perform the tasks referred to in § 15 (1). ' The third change was the addition after § 16 – § 16a in the following wording: PCSO serving in urban areas – at the request of the head of the Police organizational unit, in particularly justified cases – may conduct investigative and preparatory proceedings in the case of crimes with a slight degree of complexity, committed in his/her region, as defined in Article 206-209 and Article 210 § 1 of the Act of 6 June 1997 – Penal Code (Journal of Laws No. 88, item 553, as amended), except for cases in which the notifier, indicated in the notification as the perpetrator, victim, or suspect is deprived of liberty in this one or another case unless only detention has been applied.' Since June 20, 2016 a new order regulating the methods and forms of performing tasks by the PCSOs and the head of PCSS has been in force¹⁴.

Order No. 5 defines the criteria for determining and allocating regions, methods and forms of performing tasks by the PCSOs and the head of PCSS, organization and manner of performing the personal inspection service, documentation kept by the PCSOs and the head of PCSS, supervision over the personal inspection service. The PCSO's definition has been changed, which has been extended and also includes police officers entrusted with the implementation of PCSO's tasks, which gives the possibility to verify the candidate's suitability for performing district service. The PCSO's definition is as follows: *The PCSO – a police officer appointed for a district post or a police officer who was entrusted with the implementation of PCSO's duties in that post.* The definition of a head of PCSS includes a police officer who was appointed as the head of the district police sector or another policeman in a senior position, who was appointed by the head of the Police organizational unit to exercise supervision over PCSOs. The head of PCSS may also be a policeman who was entrusted with the duties in that post. The determination and allocation of service areas has been clarified. The definition of a personal inspection on foot was also changed. Personal inspection is the basic form of performing community service and consists of moving within the boundaries of the assigned area of service. During the inspection he/she carries out tasks resulting from his/her job duties. The same definition of an inspection appears in the Order No. 528, but has become part of the definition of an Order No. 5. The second part of the definition of this order has been given the following wording: *'Personal inspection' also means the performance of official tasks outside the headquarters of the Police organizational unit, closely related to the district region and implemented outside.*' The order

¹³ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 2012, item 17.

¹⁴ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 2016, item 26.

also indicated the way of proceeding in the designation and allocation of service areas, the solution regarding the obligation to operate in an additional service region was elaborated. The allocation of an additional region is related to the allocation of the service allowance. On the other hand, the criteria taken into account when designating the region remained the same as in the Order No. 528.

It is worth emphasizing the obligation of the head of PCSS to provide the PCSO covering the region with information regarding in particular the characteristics of the region and the threats occurring in it. The order also defined the inspection and this definition was extended in comparison with the Order 528. The inspection also includes activities such as meetings with the local community, participation in meetings of interdisciplinary teams, working teams, meetings with young people and seniors. On foot movement of the PCSO during the inspections was also indicated, although the use of the means of transport was also allowed. The head of the Police organizational unit is to provide the PCSO with the necessary means of wired and wireless communication. PCSOs were equipped with mobile phones and access to the Internet. The method of conducting briefings before the inspection is described as a short information transmission preferably using multimedia. In particularly justified cases the PCSO may start service without a briefing if he/she has obtained the consent of the immediate superior. Both the tasks and instructions provided at the briefing for the inspection service as well as the course of the service are documented in the notebook or by means of an electronic medium. The regional activity was also extended by the possibility of submitting proposals when planning the inspection regarding the time of service and the current state of safety and order in the area.

The scope of the PCSO's tasks is described in chapter 4 of the order. The PCSO's tasks include: 1) conducting the reconnaissance of the area allocated to him/her in terms of people, terrain, phenomena and events affecting the state of public safety and order; 2) carrying out tasks in the field of social prevention; 3) carrying out tasks related to the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes and misdemeanors; 4) controlling compliance with the law.

While conducting a district reconnaissance the PCSO seeks to obtain information about his /her area in the scope of: 1) socio-economic relations as well as economic and environmental structure; 2) location, size and intensity of crime-inducing phenomena; 3) social conflicts and their origins; 4) temporary or periodic events planned including sports, cultural, entertainment and commercial events. The PCSO also conducts preventive talks with people residing in or staying in his/her area, posing a threat to public safety and order, also conducts field reconnaissance, files of the region in which information gathered during the reconnaissance is collected, performs current analysis of the security situation in his/her area using information about the state of security and order. The PCSO can show creativity and should report to the head of PCSS about conclusions and proposals regarding e.g. the time and manner of accomplishing his/her own tasks.

The PCSO also performs social prevention tasks by diagnosing and indicating local threats and by directions of activities in the field of social prevention. The task of the PCSO is to implement preventive actions and programs in cooperation with other police officers and non-police entities. The PCSO is also supposed to inform residents about existing threats and give them instructions on how to protect themselves, behave in certain situations and organize themselves in order to improve safety. The PCSO also performs assistance activities for victims of crime, his/her task is also to organize counseling for victims of crimes as well as counteracting domestic violence.

Another task of the PCSO is also the preparation of a priority action plan in semi-annual cycles. This is a novelty in the organization of district work. The PCSO in consultation with the head of PCSS prepares a priority action plan. The development of the priority plan is possible on the basis of diagnosed social expectations and based on the analysis of threats in the subordinate service region. Thanks to the preparation of the priority action plan the real socialization of the tasks carried out by the PCSO is possible. This plan is approved by the head of PCSS. The choice of the priority action is given to the community and local media can be used as much as possible. If it is necessary to modify the priority plan or if the assumed goal has not been achieved, the supervisor of the head of PCSS will be acquainted with the plan. A new plan can be drawn up if major modifications to the priority action plan have to be made. At the same time, the tasks that have been carried out so far are assessed.

In the priority action plan the PCSO characterizes the diagnosed threat in the service area. The PCSO should indicate the main identified threats, which would require taking long-term activities requiring long-term impact, which goes beyond the scope of routine activities along with sources of information that form the basis of the diagnosis. Social expectations should be taken into account in particular. As part of the priority plan the PCSO indicates the goal to be achieved and defines the manner of achieving this goal. As part of the priority plan the implementation of the plan is evaluated by the degree of achievement of the assumed objective, possible difficulties in achieving it, the level of involvement of external entities, local communities and individual organizational units of the Police, if they participated in the implementation of the action and the reasons for failing to achieve the intended goal. The catalog of tasks excluded the possibility of conducting security clearance procedures and preparatory proceedings. The scope of activities that cannot be subcontracted to a district-based service in urban areas, as well as restrictions concerning all district tasks in the implementation of tasks not strictly related to the district function, such as: performing patrol service, performing activities related to accepting a notification of a crime or misdemeanor, activities in legal assistance were maintained. Within the scope of defining the duties of the head of PCSS the obligation to register the results of district work was dropped for the purpose of monitoring the effects of district services on the basis of data collected in the electronic reporting system in the

Police. It was also allowed to resign from running a book of control of affairs assigned to the PCSOs in special cases in organizational units without a separate position of the head of PCSS. Chapter 6 is devoted to the issue of supervision over the performance of the personal inspection and introduces new regulations in the matter of ensuring supervision over the course of the district service. Powiat (municipal, district) commanders have been required to issue written decisions. It was unequivocally indicated that the system of supervision over the personal inspection service should be integrated with the patrol supervision system. Direct PCSOs' supervisors are responsible for the supervision of the PCSOs performance. In order to ensure an appropriate level of supervision over the performance of the service the heads of the Police organizational units appoint police officers authorized to perform supervisory activities. The purpose of supervision over the performance of the service and activities performed as part of the supervision over the performance of the PCSO's service was also defined.

The most important changes that have occurred in the police community support services include the prohibition of conducting preparatory and explanatory proceedings in misdemeanors cases (from January 1, 2017); the introduction of prohibitions for district-based urban areas of the implementation of orders resulting from warrants received by the Police organizational unit; introduction of limitation of district participation in the implementation of tasks in the framework of non-subject subunits and police prevention departments; bureaucratization of activities and introduction of IT support tools; introduction of a priority action plan.

On 25 February 2017, another law regarding districts entered into force – Order No 6 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of February 21, 2017 amending the order on the methods and forms of performing tasks by the PCSO and the head of PCSS¹⁵. This order introduced two changes in the Order No. 5 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of June 20, 2016 on the methods and forms of performing tasks by the PCSO and the head of PCSS. The changes were dictated by the entry into force of the Ordinance of the Minister of the Interior and Administration amending the ordinance on education requirements, professional qualifications and service intervals to be met by police officers on the positions of Police Chiefs and other official positions and conditions for their appointment to higher positions as a result of what has been created a horizontal promotion path in the form of a 'senior PCSO' position. In connection with the above, the order No. 6 indicated that the change refers to § 2 point. 4, in which the PCSO definition was obtained, which had the following wording: *'PCSO- a police officer appointed for a district or senior district post, and a police officer who was entrusted with the performance of official duties on these positions.'* The second amendment referred to § 29, to which section 3 was added indicating the role of PCSO's with experience, which they should provide to less experienced PCSOs in the implementation of tasks of a considerable degree of complexity.

¹⁵ Official Journal of the Police Headquarters of 2017, item 12.

Analyzing the above-mentioned provisions, which over the past few decades delineated and continue to define the functioning of a PCSO institution, it should be stated that building a legal foundation for an important and socially necessary and professionally employed profession in the Police structures, which is community-related, has a functional and institutional dimension. As we can see, successive regulations regarding PCSOs' functioning are certainly not perfect.

The proposed and implemented changes were not always beneficial for the PCSOs. In some periods the Police leadership made PCSOs act as officials collecting information from the service area.

Throughout the period of changes in the regulations the battle over the scope of tasks that were imposed on the PCSO takes place. After the transformation period on the PCSOs were imposed too many tasks which resulted in overworking and not fully possible implementation of the assumptions. Sometimes these tasks were fuzzy and deprived of PCSOs their identities. Lack of professional promotion in the PCSO structure itself resulted in the degradation of this function. Adding tasks resulted in discouraging the PCSOs and few were applying ones for this function. As time went on there was an improvement in terms of functioning. Typically repressive actions resulted in a shift to preventive and social tasks. The policeman's personality, experience as well as his/her education is of fundamental importance when it comes to choosing for a PCSO post. Every policeman aspiring to this role should undergo training which will fundamentally prepare him/her for this role. The Police itself should take care that every police officer, especially the one who has direct contact with the citizen, is thoroughly trained putting emphasis not only on the professional profile but also interpersonal, psychological one or the specificity of the tasks performed.

The outline of the government program 'The PCSO in the neighborhood' 'The PCSO closer to us' presented at the beginning of the article provokes reflection. According to the data of the Ministry of Interior and Administration up to now the PCSO was involved in many tasks that do not belong to their competence. Presenting a new concept of PCSOs work Minister of Interior and Administration, Mariusz Błaszczak said that about 10 percent of all policemen should be PCSOs. The assumption is that PCSOs should leave their desks so that they will not be charged with additional duties. We want to strengthen the role of the PCSO - said the minister at the conference inaugurating the 'The PCSO in the neighborhood' 'The PCSO closer to us' program. The PCSO should be the first contact of the citizen with the police and also should be recognizable. He informed that the vacancies are to be completed by the end of 2017. Deputy Minister Jarosław Zieliński added that even the best-performing police will have no effect if it does not closely cooperate with the public. Changes include staff stabilization and raising the rank of PCSOs. The changes are aimed at making it profitable to be a PCSO. It will be possible to get a promotion within the PCSO function together with the salary increase. Time will tell how many of these words will remain valid. Will the assumptions be implemented? Will the proposed solutions

be able to fundamentally improve the PCSO's image and raise the prestige of this profession in the Police?

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- Order No. 6 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of February 21, 2017 amending the ordinance on methods and forms of performing tasks by the PCSO and the head of PCSS,
- Decision No. 131 of the Police Commander-in-Chief of April 25, 2016 regarding the curriculum on a specialist course for the PCSO.

Summary: This article describes the characteristics of a PCSO institution against the background of legal and political changes. In accordance with the current legal regu-

lations 'the PCSO is a police officer appointed for a PCSO or senior PCSO post and a police officer who was entrusted with carrying out his /her official duties on these posts.' Over the years the PCSO's definition has evolved. At the beginning of the political transformation only a policeman who was trained on a PCSO course was assigned to the PCSO's role. At that time he personified his/her function as a PCSO. Over time the regulations were adapted to the existing conditions. In 1999 a district division with the structure of three positions was created within the Police, namely the junior PCSO, PCSO and senior PCSO. After less than a year the positions of the junior and senior PCSO were liquidated, and thus the possibility of horizontal promotion was abolished. However, a PCSO evaluation system was introduced through a score-based assessment, consisting of calculating PCSO's points for performing specific activities. In 2004 the score-based system for the assessment of PCSOs' work was abolished. In 2007 two PCSOs categories were introduced with a limited range of tasks, a PCSO serving in urban and in non-urban areas. Over the years a number of changes have been made both in the PCSO structure itself and in the implementation of tasks that they had to perform. These changes are described in the article presented.

Keywords: Police, PCSO, service area, PCSO's district, Act on Police, 'The PCSO in the neighborhood', police community support sector (PCSS), sense of security.

CHARAKTERYSTYKA INSTYTUCJI DZIELNICOWEGO NA TLE ZMIAN PRAWNO-USTROJOWYCH

Streszczenie: Artykuł ten opisuje charakterystykę instytucji dzielnicowego na tle zmian prawno-ustrojowych. Dzielnicowy zgodnie z obecnie obowiązującymi przepisami prawnymi to policjant mianowany na stanowisko dzielnicowego lub starszego dzielnicowego oraz policjant, któremu rozkazem personalnym powierzono pełnienie obowiązków służbowych na tych stanowiskach". Na przestrzeni lat definicja dzielnicowego ewoluowała. Na początku transformacji ustrojowej do roli dzielnicowego wyznaczano policjanta mającego przeszkolenie na kursie dla dzielnicowych. Wówczas uosabiał on swoją funkcją instytucję dzielnicowego. Z biegiem czasu dostosowywano przepisy do istniejących uwarunkowań. W 1999 roku w strukturach Policji utworzono pion dzielnicowych o strukturze trzech stanowisk, a mianowicie młodszego dzielnicowego, dzielnicowego i starszego dzielnicowego. Po niespełna roku zlikwidowano stanowiska młodszego i starszego dzielnicowego a tym samym zniesieniu możliwości awansu poziomego. Wprowadzono za to system oceny dzielnicowych poprzez ocenę punkową, polegającej na naliczaniu punktów dzielnicowym za wykonanie określonych czynności. W 2004 roku został zniesiony system punktowy oceny pracy dzielnicowych. W 2007 roku wprowadzono dwie kategorie dzielnicowych o rozgraniczonym zakresie zadań, dzielnicowego pełniącego służbę w miastach i na terenach pozamiejskich. Na przestrzeni lat dokonywano szeregu zmian zarówno w samej strukturze dzielnicowych jak i w realizacji zadań jakie mieli do wykonania. Zmiany te zostały opisane w przedstawionym artykule.

Słowa kluczowe: Policja, dzielnicowy, rejon służbowy, rewir dzielnicowych, Ustawa o Policji, Dzielnicowy bliżej nas, referat dzielnicowych, poczucie bezpieczeństwa